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Articles in Today's Clips

Friday, June 6, 2008

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Man held after girl, 2, suffers third-degree burns

Posted by

[ajones](#) June 06, 2008 10:00AM

KALAMAZOO -- A Kalamazoo man was being held by police on suspicion of first-degree child abuse in connection with a Thursday incident involving a 2-year-old girl.

Kalamazoo Public Safety officers said the girl was hospitalized Thursday at Bronson Methodist Hospital for injuries, including third-degree burns to her legs and buttocks. There was no word on the child's condition Friday morning.

According to a police press release, officers arrested the man after they responded to an 11:30 a.m. report of a person with burns in the 1100 block of Interfaith Boulevard.

Officers found a 2-year-old girl with burns on her lower extremities and injuries consistent with being physically assaulted, according to the news release.

Police arrested a man known by the child's family. He was being held Friday morning at the Kalamazoo County Jail. His name was not released.

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [Crime](#)

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Poker-playing mom ordered to take parenting classes in child-neglect case

Posted by [jbarnes](#) June 06, 2008 10:15AM

WYOMING -- A Grandville mom who left her kids in the car while she played in a charity poker game will have to pay \$450 in fines and take some parenting classes.

Judge Steven Timmers told Diem Thi Tran Thursday that if she paid the fines and met other conditions within six months, her criminal record would show that the charges were dismissed.

Tran was at a charity poker event at Woody's Press Box, 5656 Clyde Park Ave. SW, on April 23 when an officer said he found her three children asleep in her car around 1:17 a.m. in the parking lot.

The Wyoming Police report stated witnesses claimed the children -- ages 5, 10 and 15 -- had been in the car for as long as three hours. Tran also was charged with no valid insurance and defective equipment on the car.

Tran, who needed proceedings translated to Vietnamese, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor child neglect charge. However, she has denied she was abusing the children and disputed the contention the kids were in the car for as long as three hours.

The children have been tended to by Child Protective Services and are in the custody of their father. Tran lives with the children and their father.

Categories: [Breaking News](#)

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Police discover suicide after call from child

Friday, June 06, 2008

Ypsilanti Police are investigating the apparent suicide of an Ypsilanti woman who was found dead Thursday after a child called police.

Police responded to the 300 block of Warden Street at about 12:45 p.m. after a girl called and said that her mother was dead. Police found a woman on a bedroom floor with a 12-gauge shot gun next to her. She was pronounced dead at the scene. Police said the woman was in her 20s, but no other information was available.

Several area agencies are available 24 hours a day to help people contemplating suicide. Their 24-hour numbers are:

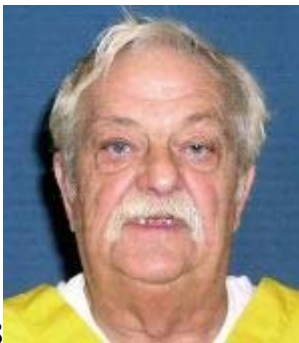
- Washtenaw County Community Mental Health Services-University of Michigan Joint Psychiatric Emergency Services, Ann Arbor, 734-996-4747.
- Ozone House Crisis Hotline, 1705 Washtenaw Ave., Ann Arbor, 734-662-2222.
- Livingston County Community Mental Health Services, 2280 E. Grand River Ave., Howell, 517-546-4126.
- University of Michigan Health System Crisis Center, 800-273-8255.

Girlfriend watched marshals catch up with Kent County fugitive 38 years later

Posted by [destep](#) June 06, 2008 06:17AM



Roger Chipman, 1968



Roger Hansen, also known as Roger Chipman,

2008

As she sat on her porch Wednesday in Milwaukee, Catherine Hietikko hardly could believe what police were saying about her boyfriend's secret past.

In a span of just minutes, she learned he had a false identity, had a sexual assault record and was wanted in Michigan for a 1970 prison escape.

Hietikko was shocked.

The man she knew as 68-year-old Roger Hansen was really 69-year-old Roger Allen Chipman, formerly of Grand Rapids -- and U.S. marshals arrested him on the spot.

Chipman, retired as a self-employed plumber and handyman, had been a fugitive for nearly 38 years after he walked away from work-duty on a farm operated by the state's Marquette Branch Prison in 1970. He was there serving a sentence of five to 10 years for child molestation in Kent County.

"He treated me real good. I didn't know nothing about his past until yesterday," said Hietikko, still reeling Thursday from the revelation. "He said he had been in jail, but he said it was over a fight in a bar."

Chipman is the third Michigan fugitive, all on the lam for more than 30 years, to be rounded up by authorities since February. The others are Roger Crona, who escaped a minimum-security prison camp in 1972, and [Susan LeFevre](#), a California mother who led an exemplary life since her 1976 escape.

Chipman cannot claim a squeaky clean life, however, with Wisconsin convictions under the Hansen name for child enticement in 1978 and child sexual assault in 1996, a crime that earned him eight years in prison.

His Michigan troubles caught up with him thanks to technological advancements that allow authorities to compare fingerprint databases. U.S. marshals, working with the Michigan Department of Corrections Absconder Recovery Unit, last month obtained Chipman's 1968 fingerprints and asked other states to look for a match.

Hansen's name came up, and authorities quickly discovered he was using a bogus Social Security number and a birth date exactly one year younger than his true age. Chipman was one of 17 prison escapees listed on the Corrections Department's "most wanted escapees" list.

Investigators could not readily explain how a fingerprint match did not come sooner, but Corrections spokesman Russ Marlin said Chipman's required registration as a sex offender in 2004 somehow triggered the match.

Now, Chipman is in the Milwaukee County Jail awaiting extradition. At a minimum, he will go back to prison for at least a year because he escaped 13 months before his first eligible parole date in 1971. But, he could serve up to four years if the parole board goes with his latest parole date, and possibly five additional years if the Marquette County

prosecutor pursues escape charges.

Marlin thinks the prison stint could be longer than shorter.

"He definitely has not led a productive life since his escape. He's been involved in criminal behavior, and serious criminal behavior at that," he said.

Hietikko met Chipman about two years ago after he came to her house from a bar across the street to talk to her. They eventually began living together.

She said Chipman has several children, but did not believe he ever married and said he is estranged from his family. He was living on Social Security the past few years, but worked in the past as a plumber, painting house and doing other odd jobs.

When marshals came to the house Wednesday, she was sitting on the front steps with Chipman. When police asked if he was Roger Chipman, he at first denied the identity, but eventually admitted it when confronted with his old prison photo and fingerprint evidence.

"He was surprised," Hietikko said.

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Byron Center teacher accused of taking illicit photos loses pay fight with district

Posted by [slangford](#) June 06, 2008 08:34AM



Press File PhotoDenied: Steven Sanger recently lost a bid to keep his \$70,000 teaching salary as his case makes its way through court.

GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP -- A suspended Byron Center High School teacher has lost his fight to have the district continue paying his \$70,000 annual salary even while he's barred from campus because he faces a felony trial for allegedly taking photos up a student's skirt.

A state tenure judge ruled against science teacher Steven Sanger, 41, who contested the school district's decision to put him on unpaid leave starting Sept. 14, a few days after he was ordered to stand trial on a charge of capturing or distributing an image of an unclothed person. The felony is punishable by up to five years in prison.

The district argued Sanger was not entitled to pay because his criminal case barred him from coming to work. The terms of his court-imposed bond forbid the teacher from being on school property or having contact with his accuser or other students listed as witnesses.

Administrative Law Judge James Ward sided with the district in an April 23 ruling that recently was made public after the time lapsed in which Sanger could have appealed to the State Tenure Commission.

The district first put Sanger on paid leave in June 2007, after the student, then 15, told school officials she thought her teacher was taking pictures under her skirt while they discussed a test. The allegation launched a police investigation.

Other classmates testified at a Sept. 11 preliminary hearing that they subsequently saw pictures like that on Sanger's camera, although 63rd District Judge Sara Smolenski said she wasn't convinced the images were of the accusing student.

Sanger remains free on a \$5,000 personal recognizance bond. His criminal trial is scheduled Aug. 4.

Superintendent Howard Napp said he considered it fair to pay Sanger through August 2007, because the alleged offense occurred on the next-to-last day of school and Sanger elects to spread out his \$70,791 pay through the contract year, which goes through August.

During the tenure hearing in March, Sanger's attorney argued the court set Sanger's bond restrictions on Napp's

recommendation the teacher have no contact with school, which made it impossible for him to render services.

"Ultimately, imposition of the pretrial release bond is the responsibility of the court alone," Ward wrote in his opinion. "Superintendent Napp's appearance at the preliminary examination and making a statement to the court does not make the bond conditions the fault of the respondent."

At the preliminary hearing, Sanger was ordered to stand trial, and his bond conditions were extended. That prompted Napp to notify Sanger by certified letter that his pay during leave would stop. Sanger appealed that decision Oct. 11.

State law allows teachers with tenure to appeal to the commission if they are discharged, demoted or suspended without pay for more than three days.

Neither Sanger nor his attorneys could be reached for comment.

Napp would not comment on how resolution of the criminal matter would affect the employment of Sanger, who has been with the district 14 years.

E-mail Kym Reinstadler: kreinstadler@grpress.com

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Michigan Report

June 6, 2008

REPORT URGES ACTION ON HEALTHCARE PROGRAMS

The state must continue to invest in healthcare programs, particularly Medicaid, to help struggling families, a [report](#) released by the Michigan League for Human Services said.

The advocacy group argued that Medicaid funding has barely kept pace with increases in participants, the former up 47.3 percent and the latter up 41.5 percent since 2001. And staffing for the program, up 6 percent over the same period, has not kept pace.

League officials said funding needed to increase not only to cover the costs of care for new recipients, but also to allow for increases in reimbursements to physicians to encourage more to participate. The report said 64 percent of physicians participated in 2005, down from 88 percent in 1999. That reduction in access pushed more recipients to more expensive emergency room care, the report said.

The report also faulted the federal government for not approving the State Children's Health Insurance Program and for other cuts in benefits and services.

HIV rate rises among state's young adults

Friday, June 06, 2008
Associated Press

LANSING -- Michigan is continuing to see an increase in HIV cases among teens and young adults.

The state Department of Community Health said Thursday that a report including statistics for 2006 continued a recent trend of increased rates for those age groups. The department said rates tend to be up nationally as well.

Statewide, the rate of new diagnoses among 13- to 24-year-olds almost doubled between 2002 and 2006.

The 2006 rate was 9.7 cases per 100,000 people. Most of the teens and young adults diagnosed between 2002 and 2006 are black.

In Kalamazoo County, about 12 percent of all individuals who have been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are 24 or younger, said Barbara Sharpe, communications director for Community AIDS Resource and Education Services.

In the first four months this year, 21 people in the 24-and-under category had been diagnosed with HIV, Sharpe said. An additional 11 had been diagnosed with AIDS. That's down slightly from the same time period in 2007, Sharpe said, when six people were diagnosed with AIDS and 29 with HIV.

An HIV Prevention Leadership Summit convenes in Detroit later this month.

Spectrum hospitals plan price hike; Priority Health to raise premiums

Posted by [Pat Shellenbarger | The Grand Rapids Press](#) June 06, 2008 07:46AM

GRAND RAPIDS -- [Spectrum Health](#), faced with mounting losses caring for Medicare and Medicaid patients, plans to raise rates at its [Butterworth](#), [Blodgett](#) and [Helen DeVos Children's](#) hospitals an average of 8 percent in the coming year.

At the same time, [Priority Health](#), the insurer owned by Spectrum, will increase the premiums it charges employers by about 7 percent, Michael Freed, Spectrum's chief financial officer, said Thursday at the hospital system's annual public meeting.

He attributed much of the increase to what he called a "hidden tax" on businesses, since Spectrum makes up the shortfall in Medicare and Medicaid payments by raising rates for other patients.

Spectrum expects to lose more than \$129 million caring for Medicare and Medicaid patients in the fiscal year beginning July 1, Freed said, compared with nearly \$83 million in the current fiscal year.

For every dollar it costs to care for a Medicare patient, the federal insurance program pays about 89 cents, he said.

Medicaid, a state and federal program for low-income residents, pays about 69 cents for every dollar it costs to care for a patient, he said.

"Clearly, one of our problems is the growing Medicare and Medicaid losses," Freed said. "It's something we've anticipated. Nevertheless, it is a problem."

This will mark the second consecutive year Spectrum has raised rates for hospital care and Priority has raised the premiums it charges for health insurance. As a result, Freed predicted a growing number of employers will choose insurance plans that include a larger deductible for their employees to pay.

"A few years ago, almost no one had deductible plans," he said.

Despite the Medicare and Medicaid losses, Spectrum's rates remain in the bottom 15 percent to 18 percent compared to similar hospitals around the country, he said.

"Even with this burden, we're still an excellent value for West Michigan," he said.

Over the coming year, Spectrum, already the area's largest employer, expects to add the equivalent of 390 full-time employees, mainly at its Grand Rapids hospitals, bringing it to more than 12,000 full-time employees.

That is in line with the nonprofit corporation's growth since Butterworth and Blodgett hospitals merged in 1997 to form Spectrum Health. The first year after the merger, the new corporation had an annual budget of about \$750 million.

The budget for the coming fiscal year will be more than \$2.7 billion, about 6 percent larger than the current year's budget.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, Spectrum will lose nearly \$60 million in the value of its investment portfolio due to stock market declines, Freed said, but added he does not expect that loss to be repeated next year.

The proposed budget anticipates income will exceed expenses by 3.4 percent, or nearly \$94 million, an amount Spectrum will reinvest in buildings and equipment, he said.



June 6, 2008

Spreading the word on health care coverage

A growing number of Calhoun County residents in need of health care coverage are discovering that help may be only a phone call away.

Over the past month, the 2-1-1 call center, a health and human services hotline, has had about an 11 percent increase in the number of calls related to health care needs. We hope that is due in part to the "Connecting Calhoun County" campaign that kicked off last month. The campaign seeks to heighten public awareness about assistance that is available for the 23,000 Calhoun County residents who have no health insurance.

By calling 2-1-1, residents can find out about programs such as MICHild and Healthy Kids, which help provide comprehensive health services for children (cell phone users can call 565-4159 and long-distance callers can dial 800-250-5628). Or they might be referred to the Calhoun County Health Plan, which helps connect residents with medical resources that are available in our community. Officials also estimate that as many as 7,000 Calhoun County residents might already qualify for existing state and federal programs but are not enrolled in them. A call to 2-1-1 might help them learn how to sign up.

Many uninsured families are frightened by the prospect of having to pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars for medical care. That is why it is vitally important that they be made aware of the various resources which might be able to help them avoid incurring huge medical bills.

The Connecting Calhoun County campaign is sponsored by the Michigan Health & Hospital Association in partnership with the Regional Health Alliance, Calhoun County Health Plan, the Volunteer Center of Battle Creek and other health and human service providers.

You're likely to see representatives of the coalition at various public events in coming months, providing information and helping people to enroll in programs for which they qualify.

As community members, we also should be mindful of relatives, neighbors and others we know who are in need of health care coverage, and encourage them to call 2-1-1 to learn about any help that might be available for them.

We all can help to spread the word.



June 6, 2008

Dropout rate fuels statewide forums

Online high school courses helped, young mom says

Derek Wallbank
Lansing State Journal

Five years ago, Kim Babcock almost became another high school dropout statistic.

The then-16-year-old Charlotte High School student was pregnant and said school didn't take precedence over her soon-arriving daughter or the job she'd have to get to support them both.

Counselors at Charlotte High recommended she enroll in Michigan Virtual School, which works with schools to offer online courses to complete degrees. She did, and graduated two years later - on time and with honors.

Babcock spoke Thursday at a summit addressing what education leaders call a dropout crisis. State records show that more than 200 high school students drop out each year in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties. Up to 20,000 students statewide drop out annually.

"I don't think there's one easy fix," Babcock, now 21, said of the dropout crisis, "but online classes certainly helped me."

The forum was one of 11 scheduled across the state.

Officials with the Michigan Education Association - the state's largest teachers union - school leaders and children's interest groups plan to present their conclusions from the forums in October.

Officials said the reasons students drop out are numerous. Some, such as Babcock, have other priorities. Some hate school, others have problems at home, some are bullied more than they can take, and still more simply fall through the cracks.

Getting kids 'to win'

Tim Russ, a teacher at Lansing's Hill Career Academy, said his strategy to fight dropouts is to "meet kids where they are."

"In my classroom, my goal with every kid is to get that kid to win," Russ said. "I don't say 'That kid can't read', I say 'How can I get that kid to the finish line?'"

Sandy Maxson, principal of the DaVinci Institute's charter high school in Jackson, spoke of her 17-year-old student whom she said would likely never earn a high school diploma because she can't pass Algebra II, required under the state's new, stricter high school graduation requirements.

Maxson proposed the state create an alternate diploma option with lower standards that struggling students could reach. The alternative, she said, is that her student could become another dropout statistic.

"She'll never get a diploma, but she can be productive," Maxson said. "I can help her. She's only 17."

It's not just the future of each student that's in jeopardy, officials warned, but the entire national economy.

"If the students who dropped out of the Class of 2007 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$329 billion in income over their lifetimes," Bob Wise, former governor of West Virginia and president of the Alliance for Excellent Education, told a White House panel in April.

Earning less

Wise's figures were based on estimates saying a dropout earns \$260,000 less over a lifetime than a high school graduate and \$1 million less than a college graduate.

In contrast, students who graduate high school rather than drop out boost the government's bottom line an average of \$127,000 per year, according to a 2006 Columbia University study, through extra tax revenue, reduced costs of public health, crime and justice, and decreased welfare payments.

"Ultimately, the best economic stimulus package for our country is a high school diploma," Wise said.

Contact Derek Wallbank at 267-1301 or dwallbank@lsj.com.



June 6, 2008

Jobless rates jumps to 5.5 percent _ biggest rise since `86

By JEANNINE AVERSA
AP Economics Writer

The nation's unemployment rate jumped to 5.5 percent in May — the biggest monthly rise since 1986 — as nervous employers cut 49,000 jobs.

The latest snapshot of business conditions showed a deeply troubled economy, with dwindling job opportunities in a time of continuing hardship in the housing, credit and financial sectors.

"It was ugly," said Richard Yamarone, economist at Argus Research.

With employers worried about a sharp slowdown and their own prospects, they clamped down on hiring in May, said Friday's report from the Labor Department. The unemployment rate soared from 5 percent in April to 5.5 percent in May. That was the biggest one-month jump in the rate since February 1986. The increase left the jobless rate at its highest since October 2004.

On Wall Street, stocks slid. The Dow Jones industrials tumbled more than 200 points in morning trading.

The big jump in the unemployment rate surprised economists who were forecasting a tick-up to 5.1 percent. Payroll losses, however, weren't as deep as the 60,000 that analysts were bracing for. Still, job losses in both March and April turned out to be larger than the government previously reported. Employers now have cut payrolls for five straight months.

The White House expressed disappointment, too.

"Certainly this isn't a report that we wanted to see today," White House deputy press secretary Scott Stanzel said. He acknowledged that the increase was higher than experts expected. "It is a number that is too high in our view but it is lower than the average of the last three decades."

The 5.5 percent rate is relatively moderate judged by historical standards. Yet, there was no question that employers last month sharply cut jobs in manufacturing, construction, retailing and professional and businesses services. Those losses swamped gains elsewhere, including in the education and health fields, government and leisure and hospitality.

The government said the number of unemployed people grew by 861,000 in May — rising to 8.5 million. The over-the-month jump in unemployment reflected more workers losing their jobs as well as an increase in those coming into the job market — especially younger people — to look for work, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said.

A year ago, the number of unemployed stood at 6.9 million and the jobless rate was 4.5 percent.

A trio of crises — housing, credit and financial — have rocked the economy. That's caused economic growth to slow to a crawl as businesses and consumers have tightened their belts. Spiraling energy costs are another negative force.

The country's economic problems are a top concern for voters — and thus for President Bush, lawmakers on Capitol Hill and those vying to win the White House this fall.

And, there's been a lot of talk about whether the economy is on the brink of, or fallen into, its first recession since 2001. That determination, made by a panel of academics, is usually made well after the fact.

"For the average American there is not debate that the economy is in a recession," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Economy.com. "That's because their net worth is lower, their purchasing power is lower and it is tough to find a job. If you lose a job, it is tough to get back in," he said.

So far this year, the government said, job losses have totaled 324,000.

Workers with jobs, however, saw modest gains.

Average hourly earnings for jobholders rose to \$17.94 in May, up 0.3 percent from the previous month. Economists were forecasting a 0.2 percent gain. Over the last 12 months, wages have grown by 3.5 percent..

With food and energy prices marching upward, paychecks aren't stretching as far. Although tax rebates helped to energize shoppers and give major retailers better sales in May, analysts still believe that anxious consumers will be keeping a close watch on their purchases and their budgets in the months ahead. A weakening job market could make people feel less inclined to spend.

Worried about inflation, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has signaled that the central bank's rate-cutting campaign, which commenced last September to help bolster the economy, is probably over for now.

Fed officials and the Bush administration are hoping that the Fed's powerful doses of rate reductions and the government's \$168 billion stimulus package, including tax rebates for people and tax breaks for businesses, will pull the economy out of its deep funk in the second half of this year.

Even if that happens, the unemployment rate is expected to climb to 6 percent or higher early next year. Employers won't want to ramp up hiring until they feel more sure that an economic recovery has strong legs.



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June 6, 2008

Livingston United Way slashes aid by 21.8%

Fundraising efforts down \$200,000 from last year

Special to the State Journal

Livingston County's largest fundraising nonprofit agency announced Wednesday an unprecedented cut of 21.8 percent in allocations to partner agencies for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, which starts July 1.

Livingston County United Way officials said the annual fundraising campaign is down \$200,000 from last year, coming in at about \$1.4 million, which means funding cuts to the more than 20 agencies with which it partners.

Almost \$160,000 of that \$200,000 would have been made up in the past by employees with Pfizer Inc. and other out-of-county companies. Pfizer closed its Ann Arbor facility last year.

"Local resources will have to be tapped more and more," said Nancy Rosso executive director of the United Way. "Local resources will have to step up to gaps that were once filled by state and federal funding."

LACASA - the county's nonprofit organization for survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse - lost \$32,000 in funding, but will still receive \$103,470 in allocations.

Three partner agencies - Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and the Hemophilia Foundation - lost complete program funding; however, they will still be eligible to apply for grants through United Way.

June 5, 2008

RETIREE HEALTHCARE BILLS BEGIN MOVING

The House Retiree Health Care Reforms Committee began Thursday moving some of the legislation aimed at returning the state to pre-paying for the benefit. But the bills will now sit on the House floor until the entire package is ready.

The committee reported [HB 6118](#), [HB 6119](#) and [HB 6120](#), all without objection, that move some functions to the Office of Retirement Services and make changes to the makeup of the State Employee Retirement System and State Police Retirement System boards.

But committee Chair [Rep. Mark Meadows](#) (D-East Lansing) said there were still issues to be addressed, both in the reported bills and in other parts of the package.

Todd Tennis, representing the Michigan State Employees Association, for instance, called for changes that would allow the unions or retiree groups to name the additional members of the boards representing those groups.

"Depending on who selects that spot it may or may not be representative of state employee associations," he said.